

Grade 7

Narrative Writing – Products of Our Environment: How Setting Shapes Characters

Instructional Unit Resource for the
*South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for
English Language Arts*

South Carolina Department of Education
Office of Standards and Learning
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Grade 7: Narrative Writing: Products of Our Environment: How Setting Shapes Characters

Unit Rationale/Overview:

This unit focuses on analyzing the impact of context on a narrative or drama, as well the way elements of plot interact; building on the sixth grade standard, this unit addresses the role of setting in character and plot development. Lessons in this unit are designed to teach students analytical reading and writing skills. The final assessment for this unit is an analytical essay in which students draw on examples and quotes from various narrative texts to explain the impact setting has on the main character or plot.

This unit supports skills and characteristics outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate (<http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/newsroom/Profile-of-the-South-Carolina-Graduate.pdf>). Students build their communication, collaboration, and teamwork skills through lessons that include opportunities for partner and small group work. Communication skills are also developed through the writing components included in the unit. The gradual release model on which these lessons were built also supports students in becoming self-directed.

Estimated time frame: two-three weeks.

Standards and Indicators

Targeted implies that these standards are the focus of the unit.

Embedded implies that these standards will be naturally integrated throughout the units.

Targeted Standards/Indicators

Reading - Literary Text

7.RL.8 Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact within a particular context.

7.RL.8.1 Analyze how setting shapes the characters and/or plot and how particular elements of a narrative or drama interact; determine the impact of contextual influences on setting, plot, and characters.

Writing

7.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

7.W.3.1 Gather ideas from texts, multimedia, and personal experience to write narratives that:
a. develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences;
b. engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters;

- c. organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically;
- d. use dialogue, pacing, and manipulation of time to develop experiences, events, and/or characters;
- e. use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another;
- f. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing, building on personal ideas and the ideas of others;
- g. use imagery, precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action, convey experiences and events and develop characters; and
- h. provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on narrated experiences or events.

Embedded Standards/Indicators

Inquiry-Based Literacy

7.I.1 Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.

7.I.1.1 Develop a range of questions to frame inquiry for new learning and deeper understanding.

7.I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.

7. I.3.2 Examine historical, social, cultural, or political context to broaden inquiry.

7.I.4 Synthesize integrated information to share learning and/or take action.

7. I.4.3 Reflect on findings and pose appropriate questions for further inquiry.

7.I.5 Reflect throughout the inquiry process to assess metacognition, broaden understanding, and guide actions, both individually and collaboratively.

7.I.5.1 Acknowledge and value individual and collective thinking and using feedback from peers and adults to guide the inquiry process.

7.I.5.2 Employ past and present learning in order to monitor and guide inquiry.

Clarifying Notes and “I Can” Statements

Clarifying Notes

This unit’s activities will work with any literary texts. Teachers may use this unit with the study of a novel or with various short stories. The activities contain suggestions that will serve as good models.

The lesson format is that of gradual release. The Gradual Release Model is when a teacher models for students as a whole group, has them practice in a small group, and then work independently (Levy, 2007). The modeling portion (I do) is a mini-lesson shown by the teacher and should emphasize how to *think through* the process while demonstrating it. The guided practice (we do) might include the teacher and students’ working together, students’ working in small groups, or both. It is recommended, but not required, that students complete the independent practice (you do) on their own to determine their individual mastery of the “I can” statement (and standard). Naturally, this format is not required, and teachers who choose to use the included lessons or structure should determine which suggestions fit best within the gradual release

components (or other instructional method) based on their own knowledge of students.

"I Can" Statements

"I Can" statements are learning targets for what students needs to know and accomplish as related to the standards/indicators.

- I can identify the elements of a narrative or a drama including setting, character, and plot. (7.RL.8.1)
- I can analyze how setting impacts characters in a narrative or drama. (7.RL.8.1)
- I can analyze how setting impacts plot in a narrative or drama. (7.RL.8.1)
- I can analyze how particular elements of a narrative or drama interact. (7.RL.8.1)
- I can determine how context impacts setting, plot, and characters in a narrative or drama. (7.RL.8.1)
- I can write informative/explanatory texts to analyze literary texts. (7.W.2.1)
- I can select and effectively use relevant information to convey ideas when writing informative/explanatory texts (7.W.2.1)
- I can effectively organize my writing when writing informative/explanatory texts, (7.W.2.1)
- I can use language that is appropriate for my audience and purpose when writing informative/explanatory texts.(7.W.2.1)

Essential Questions

These are **suggested** essential questions that will help guide student inquiry.

- When I read a narrative or drama, how do I analyze the relationships among the components (plot, characters, and setting)? (7.RL.8.1)
- When I read a narrative or drama, how do I determine the role the context plays in the plot, character development, and setting? (7.RL.8.1)
- How does the context of a literary work affect the plot, character development, and setting? (7.RL.8.1)
- How do I organize my writing and support my ideas in an informative text? (7.W.2.1)

Academic Vocabulary

Some students may need extra support with the following academic vocabulary in order to understand what they are being asked to do. Teaching these terms in an instructional context is recommended rather than teaching the words in isolation. The ideal time to deliver explicit instruction for the terms would be during the modeling process. Ultimately, the student should be able to use the academic vocabulary in conversation with peers and teachers.

context
dialogue
characters
setting

plot

Prior Knowledge

In sixth grade, students learned

- how a plot unfolds and how characters respond or change as the story progresses towards a resolution
- how context influences setting, plot, and characters
- how to write a story involving characters from different texts

Student will need to know:

- how to identify elements of plot including, setting, characters, conflict
- how to properly cite textual evidence in their writing
- how to structure essays
- how to use effective transitions in their writing
- how to use revision and editing techniques

Subsequent Knowledge

In eighth grade, students will

- analyze how dialogue and/or incidents propel the action, reveal aspects of character, or provoke a decision
- write an analytical essay, explaining how a character changes throughout the course of a narrative by using a combination of dialogue and details from the text for support

Potential Instructional Strategies

These lessons are designed to be taught in the order listed below.

Lessons for Background Building for Context

Learning Target: I can build my knowledge of a particular context (time period). (7.RL.8.1)

Guiding Question: What is context? How do I build my knowledge of a particular context?

- **Model (I do):** Choose a picture book with an influential context. (*Baseball Saved Us* will be the text used for explaining the remainder of this lesson.) Review the concept of context with students, reminding them that context includes setting. Introduce the book to students by explaining that it is set during World War II. (This book will not be read during this lesson. It will be used in a later lesson to demonstrate the role that context plays in character development and plot.) Explain that knowledge of WWII is important in understanding the story. Provide students with a copy of the ABC Brainstorming Chart found here: <http://www.studenthandouts.com/3web/abcbrainstorming.pdf>. Explain that this activity will help students collect information about WWII from their own background knowledge. Jot down information about WWII in a few boxes on the chart. For example, write “Japan” in the J box and explain that Japan was one of the countries in the war.

- Guided Practice (We do): After completing a few boxes, ask students to help you complete a few more. Students may add information to the boxes you completed independently. For example, students may know that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.
- Independent Practice: (You do): Have students work in pairs or small groups to finish the chart. Monitor students' responses as they work. After most students have completed the majority of the chart, have students share their answers during a whole group discussion. You may wish to create an anchor chart, showing the class's answers if this time period will be significant to other texts you'll read.

You may choose to use the following resources and activities as needed to build students' understanding of setting.

SOAPSTone strategies students can use to analyze texts.

<http://teacherweb.com/LA/MandevilleHighSchool/Hooker/soapstone-reading-strategy.pdf>.

Setting Chart and Activities

This site includes several charts and activities to help students identify setting in stories. Completing the chart would be helpful during or immediately following reading before further plot analysis.

<http://bookunitteacher.com/wp/?p=405>

“[Knoxville, Tennessee](#)” [Setting Analysis](#) found in the Appendix.

These questions, similar to those used in the above chart, were designed to be used with Nikki Giovanni's poem “Knoxville, Tennessee” but could be adapted to other literary pieces.

Poem: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/knoxville-tennessee>

[Generic Questions for Setting](#) found in the Appendix

This document contains questions about setting that may be adapted for use with various narrative texts.

Lessons for Interactions of Plot Elements

Learning Target: I can analyze how setting impacts characters in a narrative. (7.RL.8.1)

Guiding Question: How does setting impact character development?

- Model (I do): Return to the picture book used in the first setting lesson above. (The remainder of this lesson explanation is based on

Baseball Saved Us.) Explain to students that they will practice analyzing how setting impacts character development. Review the context of the story. Tell students that you will conduct a think aloud in which you read the story aloud, stopping periodically to tell students what you are thinking about how the characters and setting interact. Begin reading the book, preferably using a document camera so that students may follow along. Stop periodically to make comments about the characters and the role of setting.

- **Guided Practice (We do):** After several pauses to explain your thinking, tell students that you will continue reading and pausing so that students can think about the role of setting in character development. Continue reading, pausing at appropriate times so that students can jot their thoughts on paper. Have students share their written thoughts with an elbow partner. Call on one or two students to share with the whole group before continuing. Finish reading the book, having students contribute to the thinking aloud.
- **Independent Practice (You do):** With partners or in small groups, have students read a picture book or short story, annotating the impact that setting has on character development. Students may use Post-It notes to annotate if writing on the text itself isn't permissible. When all groups have completed the assignment, have students share their findings with the whole class. (A lesson on text annotation may be found in the Resources section below.)

Use the following lesson to build on the lesson above. This lesson can also serve as a model for writing additional lessons on the interaction of narrative elements:

Interaction of Narrative Elements:

This lesson uses text-dependent questions to guide students to an understanding of how setting, plot, and characters interact in “Three Skeleton Key” by George Toudouze. Additional questions about the influence of setting may be added to support this component of the standard.

Lesson: achievethecore.org/file/626

Story: <http://www.mpsaz.org/taylor/staff/bjdavis/short-stories/files/threeskeletonpdf.pdf>

You may choose to use the following resources and activities as needed to continue building students’ understanding of element interaction.

“Text Analysis and Character Revelations: ‘Flowers for Algernon’”

<https://coretools ldc.org/mods/d0178588-3383-4e04-8ff7-f07b010eec82/curriculum>

EngageNY: Working with Evidence: Identity and Transformation: Then and Now

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/grade-7-ela-module-2b>

Lesson for Analytic Essay Writing

Learning Target: I can identify the components of an analytical essay. (7.W.2.1)

Guiding Question: What is an analytical essay?

- **Model (I do):** Return to the picture book used in the previous lessons (*Baseball Saved Us*) Remind students that their work during this unit is enabling them to understand how the elements of plot influence each other, specifically how setting impacts the plot and characters. Explain that being able to communicate their ideas in a formal, written format is essential to their future educational and work experiences. Ask students to name the key elements of good writing (organization, details, support for opinions, etc.) Explain to students that they will learn to write a formal analytical essay. Provide students with a copy of “Living Through the Great Depression” (without annotations; p. 95 of the Achieve the Core Informational / Expository Writing Samples) found here: http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/InformativeExplanatory_K-12WS.pdf. Explain to students that you will conduct a think aloud of the essay, annotating what you notice about the writer’s process. (For example, the writer begins with a clear introduction; the writer quotes a text titled “Digging In.” Acknowledge that you know this text must be an article or story from the use of quotation marks but that you know nothing else about it. Make these annotations, and have students write your annotations on their own copies.
- **Guided Practice (We do):** After writing the above annotations, continue reading the paragraph, pausing to have students share their thoughts.
- **Independence Practice (You do):** Provide students with a copy of “Dignity and Hope” (without annotations; p. 99 of the Achieve the Core Informational / Expository Writing Samples). Have students work independently to read and annotate “Dignity and Hope.” After most students have finished, have them share their thoughts, using Think-Pair-Share-Square.

You may choose to use the following resources and activities as needed to continue building students’ writing skills.

TEPAC Paragraph Structure

https://www.sandiegounified.org/schools/sites/default/files_link/schools/files/Domain/19525/Analytical%20Paragraph%20Chart.pdf

Choose a video on parenthetical documentation, using the MLA style, and share it with the class. Give students access to these videos so that they can view them on their own if needed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCVrtKNO62o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5igNRmKLug&nohtml5=False>

Inside or Outside? A Mini-lesson on Quotation Marks and More

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/inside-outside-minilesson-quotation-118.html>

And I Quote: A Punctuation Proofreading Mini-lesson

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/quote-punctuation-proofreading-minilesson-1124.html>

Achieve the Core Informative / Expository Writing Samples

http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/InformativeExplanatory_K-12WS.pdf

Potential Assessment Tasks

Formative Assessment Resources:

53 Ways to Incorporate Formative Assessments in your classroom:

<https://www.edutopia.org/pdfs/blogs/edutopia-finley-53ways-check-for-understanding.pdf>

Four Formative Assessment Practices That Make a Difference in Classrooms:

<https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2016/04/4-Formative-Assessment-Practices-that-Make-a-Difference-in-Classrooms.pdf>

Tracking and Supporting Student Learning with Kidwatching

<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/tracking-supporting-student-learning-30971.html>

Summative Assessment:

Write an essay analyzing how the main character and/or plot is shaped by the setting, using a combination of examples and quotes from the text for support. Students will be provided with “cold reads” to read and analyze for this task. **(7.RL.8.1, 7.W.2.1)**

Teachers will use the SC Ready Scoring Guidelines for Text-dependent Analysis to assess this essay. Checklists and Scoring Guidelines may be found at:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tests/middle/sc-ready/writing-component-of-sc-ready/>

Summative Assessment

Using the texts in this unit as a model, write a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences (7.W.3, 7.W.3.1)

Teachers will use the SC Ready Scoring Guidelines for Text-dependent Analysis to assess this essay. Checklists and Scoring Guidelines may be found at:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tests/middle/sc-ready/writing-component-of-sc-ready/>

Resources

Achieve the Core Mini-Assessment: The Tomorrow Seeds

<http://achievethecore.org/category/415/ela-literacy-assessments>

Achieve the Core Mini-Assessment: The Glorious Whitewasher

<http://achievethecore.org/page/895/the-glorious-whitewasher-from-the-adventures-of-tom-sawyer-by-mark-twain-mini-assessment>

Achieve the Core Mini-Assessment: “The Wave”

<http://achievethecore.org/page/1117/from-the-wave-by-thom-gunn-mini-assessment>

Literacy Design Collaborative (must sign up for free membership to access lessons):

<https://coretools ldc.org>

SC Ready Scoring Guidelines:

http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/tests/middle/scready/SC_READY_TDA_Scoring_Guidelines_With_Nonscore_Codes.pdf

SC Ready Writer’s Checklist:

http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/tests/middle/scready/SC_READY_Writers_Checklist_Grades4-8.pdf

Text Annotation Lesson:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-student-annotation-constructing-1132.html?tab=3#tabs>

Writing Component of SC Ready:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tests/middle/sc-ready/writing-component-of-sc-ready/>

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Generic Questions for Setting

1. How might the novel / story / drama / poem be different if it were set in another time?
2. How might the novel / story / drama / poem be different if it were set in another place?
3. How does the setting affect the narrator / characters? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
4. How does the setting affect the narrator / character(s)? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
5. Why did the author include these details about the setting? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
6. How does the setting create external conflict? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
7. How does the setting create internal conflict? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
8. What obstacles does the setting create? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
9. How are the conflicts in the text related to setting? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
10. How does the setting impact the character's ability to _____? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
11. How does the setting influence the character's life? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
12. How does the setting cause the character(s) to change? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
13. How does the setting create suspense? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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“Knoxville, Tennessee” Setting Analysis

Directions: Read “Knoxville, Tennessee” by Nikki Giovanni once for meaning, making annotations as needed. Next, read the poem a second time, paying close attention to the setting. Finally, complete the following:

1. Explain how this poem might be different if it were set some place other than Knoxville, Tennessee.

2. Explain how this poem would be different if it were set in a season other than summer.

3. How does the setting affect the narrator? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

4. Using the poem as a model, draft your own poem in the space below that tells about a special setting and its impact on you.

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